

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
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PBSUCCESS/RYPAT
CLASSIFICATION

DATE 23 MAY 1954

TO PBSUCCESS, Headquarters

FROM LINCOLN

SUBJECT (GENERAL
SPECIFIC

INFO: Acting Chief of Station,

Manuel MORALES Orell: circumstances of his death

REF: DIR 49890

1. In partial response to your inquiry in reference cable (which we repeated to [] in LINC 2502), we are forwarding a letter which we have received addressed to [] from CALLIGERIS and dated 9 May 1954: it gives at least some explanation of the Subject's death. The Spanish original as well as an English translation is attached.

2. We still fail to understand why -- under the conditions described in the attached letter -- MORALES was referred to as a "martyr" since he was neither killed by his enemies nor did he commit suicide as the result of persecution. However, since no harm has arisen from this somewhat misleading allusion to Subject's "martyrdom" and in view of the fact that the [] is overworked with more urgent matters, we do not propose to push any further investigation -- at least for the time being.

[JEROME C. DUNBAR]

JCD/EFL/sgw

21 May 1954

Distribution:

- 3 - WASH (w/att) ✓
- 2 - [] (w/o att)
- 3 - LINC (w/att)

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9 May 1954

Esteemed Friend:

Moved by inconsolable sorrow, I have the sad task of addressing you in order to communicate in detail the tragedy which occurred in this his home, Wednesday the 5th of this month. I did not do so before because I wanted to wait until some matters were clarified before sending you the present letter.

Manuel Morales Orell, the great "Moralitos" -- as we affectionately called him -- died on the night of the 5th of May as the result of a regrettable accident.

We sat talking after dinner and all got up from the table around 8:35 p.m. Some of the boys remained in the patio of the house, chatting happily while Moralitos, contentedly, climbed the stairs to the office from where he will never return. Mario Quinones went up the stairs behind him and in a joking tone Moralitos addressed himself to Quinones and said, more or less, "let's play Russian roulette, you and I. . . ." to which Quinones-- without attaching much importance to it -- answered ". . . stop such foolishness". We were all on the floor below when we heard running and then a body fall. We ran up the stairs and there was the bloody body of Manuel surrounded by a pool of blood. The gun by which he had accidentally lost his life was thrown by his side -- an old Smith and Wesson, 38 caliber revolver. The bullet entered through the right temple and emerged through the occiput, leaving the brain matter uncovered. . .

According to what we have been able to verify later, this was not the first time that Moralitos played this suicidal game. Indeed on one occasion Lionel Sisniega seriously talked with him and explained that one day -- which as it did indeed turn out -- one bullet would remain in the chamber and end his life. I am absolutely certain that he did not do this impelled by a desire for suicide because just a few moments before he was chatting away, full of optimism and happiness. If he had tried to commit suicide, he would at least have left some letter explaining the reasons which compelled him to do such a thing. It is thus necessary to discard such a possibility.

The regrettable affair took place exactly at 8:40 p.m. and his death occurred at 10:15 in the operating room of the Medical Center. Immediately after we had realized the tragedy, we set to work. I sent a telegram to the parents of the boy, called the justice, the doctor and the priest to attend him together with some reporters in order to avoid any sinister interpretations. The justice came with the doctor around 9:15 p.m. ; he performed the appropriate examination and the Doctor indicated that he would make any further attempt to save him that he could but that the

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wound was fatally mortal. As soon as the examination was completed, we requested an ambulance and transferred the body to the Medical Center where he died, as I said before, at 10:15 p.m.

The body was transferred to the San Felipe Hospital for embalming in order to send the body to his mourning parents in Guatemala. The following day we began preparations to arrange for the departure of the body on an express SAHSA plane. We needed a delegation to accompany the remains to Guatemala: Lawyer Valladares' wife and his two daughters, la srta. Sonia Orellana and the Honduran Lawyer Roberto Soto Suazo volunteered for this task. We started proceedings with the Minister del Fomento for the plane's departure and with the Guatemalan consulate for the appropriate permits and visas for the accompanying persons. As usual, the latter put up an endless number of difficulties. Due to so much difficulty the body was not sent off until Friday the 7th at 4:00 p.m.

The group who accompanied the body returned yesterday at 6:30 p.m. without encountering any difficulty. They have informed me that his family accepted the regrettable event resignedly. I sent a personal letter to Moralitos' father, informing him of the entire event.

Those who were present in the house at the moment of the accident have already been summoned to make a declaration before the justice and there has been no problem. It has been proved that it was an accidental event although the press which always attacks us -- financed by the Guatemalan Embassy -- has described the death of our companion as "mysterious."

Nevertheless the Guatemalan press has fittingly described the event, thanks to the statements which those accompanying the mortal remains made in the capital. I am sending you a clipping from "Prensa Libre" for the 8th of this month so that you may appreciate this.

I beg of you to communicate such unhappy news to Lionel and to tell him that messages of condolence have been received from all over. His companions are unconsolable and I can already imagine the effect which this news has had on you for you have felt toward one another as true brothers for so long a time.

We have lost one of our finest members. A young, dynamic and intelligent man. His memory will live on in all the hearts of those who had the good fortune to know him through daily contact during two years of exile. You knew him well and you know the enormous love which we all had for him. It is undeniably an irreparable loss.

I have thus complied with the sorrowful task of communicating this to you and I know before hand that you feel as badly as we. I prey you to present my deepest feelings of condolence to Lionel.

With wishes for your personal well-being and with the request that you greet your wife and daughters for me, I remain your affectionate servant and friend,

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CALLIGERIS

Mayo 9 de 1954.

Estimado amigo:

Embargado por un dolor inconsolable, tengo la pena de dirigirme a usted para comunicarle detalladamente la tragedia ocurrida en esta su casa el miércoles 5 del corriente. No lo hice antes, porque quise esperar que se aclararan algunas cosas antes de enviarle la presente.

Manuel Morales Orell, el gran "Moralitos" —como le llamábamos cariñosamente— falleció la noche del 5 de Mayo como consecuencia de un lamentable accidente.

Estuvimos charlando después de cenar y nos levantamos todos de la mesa a eso de las 8:35 p.m. En el patio de la casa quedaron algunos de los muchachos platicando alegremente y Moralitos muy contento subió las gradas hacia la oficina, de donde no volvería jamás. Mario Quiñones subió detrás de él y en tono de broma Moralitos dirigiéndose a Quiñones le dijo más o menos: "... juguemos ruleta rusa, ve...." a lo que Quiñones —sin darle mayor importancia— le contestó "...dejate de babosadas..." Estábamos todos en la planta baja, cuando oímos un estampido y un cuerpo que caía. Subimos corriendo y allí estaba el cuerpo ensangrentado: de Manuel revolviéndose en un mar de sangre. A un lado estaba tirada el arma con la cual accidentalmente perdió la vida: un revólver viejo Smith y Wesson calibre .38. La bala entró por el temporal derecho y salió por el occipital dejando al descubierto la masa encefálica...

Según hemos podido verificar después, no era la primera vez que Moralitos hacía este juego suicida. Ya en una ocasión Lionel Siniega le llamó seriamente la atención por estar exponiendo a que un día — como así fué — una bala quedara en el tumor del revólver y terminara con su vida. Estoy absolutamente seguro que no obró impulsado por el deseo de suicidarse porque estuvo charlando momentos antes lleno de optimismo y alegría. Si hubiérase tratado de un suicidio, por lo menos tendría que haber alguna carta explicando los motivos que lo impulsaron a cometer tal hecho. Hay que descartar, pues, tal posibilidad.

El hecho lamentable sucedió exactamente a las 8:40 p.m. y su muerte ocurrió hasta las 10:15 p.m. en la sala de operaciones del Centro Médico. Inmediatamente que nos dimos cuenta de la tragedia, nos pusimos en actividad. Envié telegramas a los padres del muchacho, llamé al juez, médico y cura que le asistiera, así como a algunos reporteros de prensa para evitar cualquier mala interpretación. El juez vino con el médico a eso de las 9:15 p.m.; se levantó el acta correspondiente y el médico indicó que era de más hacer cualquier intento de salvarlo, pues que la herida era fatalmente mortal. Luego que se hizo aquella diligencia, pedimos una ambulancia y fué trasladado el cuerpo al Centro Médico, donde falleció como le digo anteriormente, a las 10:15 p.m.

El cadáver fué trasladado al Hospital San Felipe para que fuera embalsamado con el objeto de enviarlo a sus apesadados padres a Guatemala. Al día siguiente, empezamos a gestionar la salida del cadáver en un avión expreso de la SAHSA. Necesitábamos que una comisión fuera acompañando los restos a Guatemala y para ello se ofrecieron voluntariamente la esposa del Lic. Villadares y sus dos hijas, la señorita Sonia Orellana y el Lic. hondureño Roberto Ito Suazo. Iniciamos las gestiones ante el Ministerio de Fomento para la salida del avión y ante el Consulado de Guatemala para los permisos correspondientes, las visas de los acompañantes. Como era natural —este último— puso un fin de dificultades.

Debido a tanta dificultad, el cadáver no fué desahogado sino hasta el viernes 7 a las 4:00 p.m.

La comisión que fué llevando el cadáver regresó ayer a las 6:30 a.m. y no encontraron dificultad alguna. Me han informado que la familia aceptó resignadamente el lamentable suceso. Envié una carta personal al padre de Morality, informándole de todo lo sucedido.

Los que estuvimos presentes en esta casa en el momento del accidente, ya estamos siendo llamados al Juzgado para declarar y no ha habido problema alguno. Está demostrado que fué un accidente casual, aunque la prensa que nos ataca siempre —la financiada por la Embajada de Guatemala— ha calificado de "miseriosa" la muerte del compañero. Eso, claro está, no podía faltar.

Sin embargo la prensa de Guatemala se ha referido muy acertadamente a lo sucedido, gracias a las declaraciones que hicieron en la capital, los acompañantes de los restos mortales. Le acompaño un recorte de "Prensa Libre" del 8 del corriente para que usted lo pueda apreciar.

Ruego a usted comunicar tan infausta noticia a Lionel y decirle que de todas partes se han recibido mensajes de condolencia. Sus compañeros están inconsolables y ya me puedo imaginar el efecto que esta noticia causará en su ánimo, ya que por tanto tiempo se quisieron como verdaderos hermanos.

Hemos perdido a uno de nuestros mejores elementos. Un muchacho joven, dinámico e inteligente. Su recuerdo vivirá latente en todos los corazones de los que tuvimos la dicha de conocerlo a través de su trato cotidiano durante dos años de exilio. Usted le conocíó muy bien y sabe el enorme cariño que todos le tuvimos. Es indudablemente una pérdida irreparable.

He cumplido, hasta aquí, con la pena de comunicárselo y sé de antemano que usted lo está sintiendo tanto como nosotros. Le ruego presentar a Lionel mis más sentidas muestras de condolencia.

Haciendo votos por su bienestar personal y rogándole saludar a su señora e hijas, quedo de usted su afmo. servidor y amigo,

